

Claims 1, 3-9, 11-17, 19-26, 28-34, 37-45 and 47-52 remain in this application, of which Claims 1, 9, 17, 25, 34 and 43 are independent.

Claims 1, 3-9, 11, 17, 19-26, 28-34, 37-45 and 47-52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,555,362 (Yamashita et al.) in view of U.S. Patent 6,356,314 (Takebe).

Independent Claim 1 is directed to a reduced image forming apparatus that comprises dividing means for dividing an original image into a plurality of image blocks, extracting means for extracting a plurality of partial images from each of the image blocks, and generating means for combining the extracted partial images and generating a combined image smaller than the original image. Also provided are indicating means for indicating the combined image.

As is described at page 3, lines 19-24, of the present application, one object of the present invention is to be “capable of easily identifying the contents of even a document having no distinctive feature”. This is achieved by the structure recited in Claim 1. In an apparatus according to Claim 1, it should be noted that “the image” ⊃ “the image block” ⊃ “the partial image”. By virtue of the structure recited in Claim 1, because a part of “the partial images” is selected from “the image block”, and because “the combined image” is generated using only “the partial image” (in other words, “the combined image” is generated by adopting a method to thin out regions which are not selected as “the partial image” in “the image block” -- the “method of the present invention”, hereafter), it is possible to obtain “the combined image”, which is smaller than the “image” by the amount of thinning out, thus, “the reduced image”.

As a result, and as discussed at page 11, lines 19-22: “That is, even . . . be recognized through the document, . . . in one part” and at page 16, lines 17-21: “That is, even . . . in the whole reduced image can be recognized,. . . the reduced image”; thus, because the character can be recognized throughout the document by thinning out, it is possible to form a reduced image using which it is easy to identify the document contents.

*Yamashita* relates to analyzing the layout of a document image, segmenting it into parts and recomposing it in order to generate a flexible layout mode. Even if it be deemed that *Yamashita* has the recited dividing means and generating means, and some sort of indicating means, however, nothing has been found, or pointed out, in that patent that would teach or suggest indicating a combined image generated by generating means, as recited in Claim 1.

Moreover, *Yamashita* does not describe obtaining a “reduced image”, as recited in Claim 1, and consequently fails in this respect also to teach or suggest the structure recited in that claim. What *Yamashita* achieves is merely a layout change for an image, and that patent contains no description whatsoever that Applicant has found of the recited extracting means, for extracting a plurality of partial images from each of a plurality of image blocks, much less generating means for combining such partial images extracted by such extracting means and generating from them a combined image, as recited in Claim 1. For all these reasons, it is believed that Claim 1 is clearly allowable over *Yamashita*, taken alone.

*Takeda* relates to taking out a part of an image and displaying it at an arbitrary magnification so as to verify with ease the image input by a scanner, and so on, on

a display. Even if it be deemed that *Takeda* showed the recited dividing means, some kind of generating means and indicating means, the *Takeda* apparatus only magnifies or reduces the *divided image block* itself. Nothing in that patent is seen to teach or suggest thinning out an image from an image block, as is called for by Claim 1. Thus, nothing in that patent is seen to teach or suggest the recited extracting means, which are for “extracting a plurality of partial images from each of the plurality of image blocks”, much less the recited generating means for combining a plurality of such partial images extracted in that fashion and generating a combined image from them.

From the foregoing, it is believed to be apparent that even if *Yamashita* and *Takeda* are combined in the manner proposed in the Office Action (and even assuming that the proposed combination would be permissible), the result would not have the features recited in Claim 1. Accordingly, that claim is believed to be clearly allowable over those two patents, taken separately or in any permissible combination.

Independent Claim 25 is directed to a reduced image forming apparatus that comprises converting means for converting an original image into a character train, dividing means for dividing the character train so converted into a plurality of character train blocks, and extracting means for extracting a partial character train from each of the plurality of character train blocks. Also provided are generating means for combining a plurality of partial character trains extracted by the extracting means, converting the combined partial character trains into an image, and generating a combined image smaller than the original image, and indicating means for indicating the combined image generated in this fashion.

Claim 25 is believed to be allowable over *Yamashita* and *Takeda* for substantially the same reasons as is Claim 1.

The other independent claims are each respectively a method or a memory-medium claim corresponding either to Claim 1 or to Claim 25, and are all deemed allowable for the same reasons as are Claims 1 and 25.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicant's opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as references against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

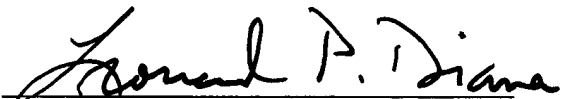
The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

An Information Disclosure Statement is submitted herewith.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

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